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February 6, 1979

Dear Miss Oakar:

The Secretary has asked me to reply to your letter of January 9 concerning the Department's response to the Jonestown, Guyana tragedy.

The Justice Department is fully exploring possible legal remedies which can be used to recover the cost the U. S. Government has incurred in removing and processing the bodies of Americans from Guyana. Now that the emergency is substantially over, the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies are reviewing various operations to determine the exact cost to the United States Government. Although the costs to the United States Government of an effort of this magnitude obviously are considerable, they are substantially less than the $8 million figure used in some press reports.

At present, no decision has been reached concerning the ultimate disposition of the unclaimed bodies. Please be assured that we will report fully to appropriate congressional committees on these aspects of the operation upon completion of our review. Meanwhile, the Justice Department will make all efforts to recover the costs to the U.S. Government.

Sincerely,

GW

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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The Honorable
Mary Rose Oakar,
House of Representatives.

CA/OCS/CCS/ARA/JO Kane:dg 1/31/79
Control No. 008-1800

Clearances
OCS:Miss Day
CA:Miss Watson
H&R:J Trizek